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FARM LABOR NEWS

Vol. 6, No. 8 — 16 — Washington, D. C., November, 1951 — 50 Cents Per Year

Minn.-Wis. Locals In District Meet

On October 13, Minnesota and Wisconsin dairy farm locals met in Superior, Wisconsin, to work out plans for future negotiations with the milk distributors in that area.

Among the topics discussed, was a proposal to set up a welfare program providing pensions for dairy farmers when they retired from farming. Officers of the informal Minn.-Wis. Dairy Farm Council, were authorized to contact the Union Labor Life Insurance Co., for assistance in working out the proposal on a sound financial basis.

John L. Banks, Jr., of Local 293, acted as Chairman of the meeting. Among those attending were the following:

Charles Leffel, Karl Schimenek, Jacob Schmid, Harold H. Wick, Otto R. Eggert, Joe Geller, John L. Banks, Robert L. Faricy, Milo Peterson, Waino Walkama, George Winter, Walter Weister, Russell Chute, Jesse L. Cleveland, Frank Kantarowski.

H. L. Mitchell, National President and Dorothy Dowe, National Secretary-Treasurer, from Washington, D. C., also attended the meeting.

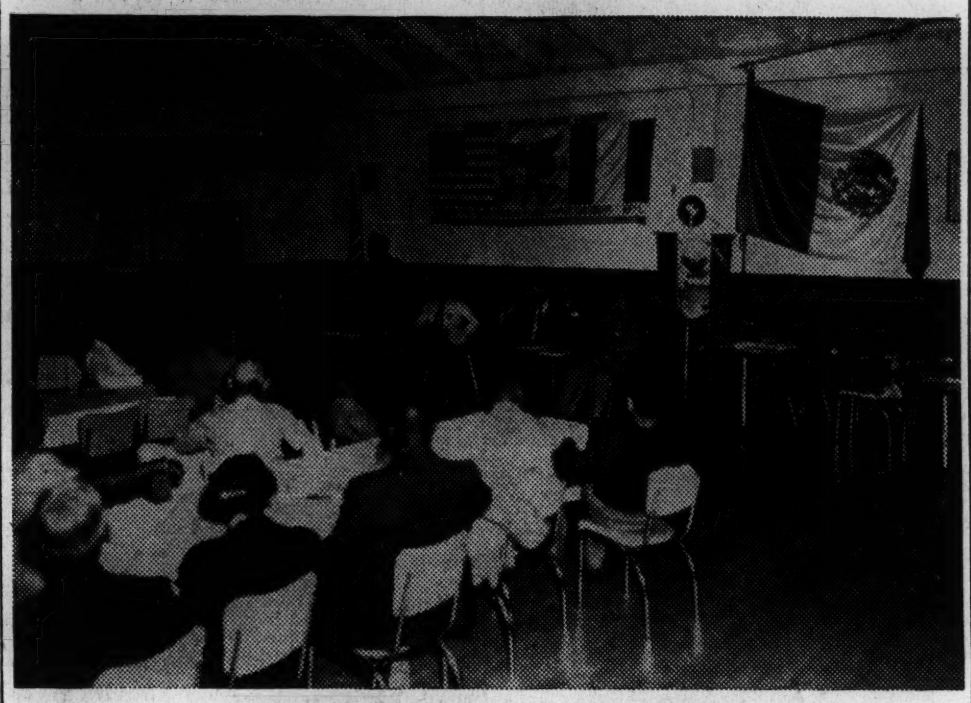
President Mitchell told the delegates from the six local unions that their organization had some part in a recent decision of the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor in breaking off relations with the Farm Bureau, National Grange and other anti-labor-anti-farmer organizations. Mitchell told how the A. F. of L. office has been swamped with identical letters, resolutions and protests from farm organization leaders demanding that the A. F. of L. stop assisting dairy farmers to organize and improve their living standards.

Mitchell said, "If these so-called farm leaders had done a job for you people, we would have never been called on to help you organize in a trade union." Karl Schimenek, President of Local 293, replied that the dairy farmers had belonged to many organizations, and all of them had some good things about them, but that it was the first time in his experience that the dairy farmer had an organization that put up a fight for the interests of its members right here at home.

Schimenek said farm organization-leaders always talked about educating the farmer and getting legislation enacted in Washington and in Madison, but never walked a picket line before daylight when it was 30 below zero, as the NFLU members did last November.

New locals of dairy farmers organized at Ashland, Wis., and Aitkin, Minn., were represented at the Superior meeting. Organization of a new local at Hibbing was also reported.

California Convention



INTRODUCING A SPEAKER

President William Becker, of the California Council of Agricultural Unions standing. Seated, at speakers' table are: Left to right: Mike Sota, of Soledad, Bill Swearingen, of Fresno, Spanish and English Secretaries. Next to Becker is Carl Lara, Assistant President, Jose Hernandez, Secretary General, Mexican Union of Nationals in U. S. A., a featured speaker at the Convention, H. L. Mitchell, President of the National Farm Labor Union, Attorney A. H. Schullman, of Los Angeles, in the rear. The other person seated at the table is a member and an officer of the Mexican Union of Nationals. Note the Union banners, and the flags of the United States and Mexico.

UNION LAWYER SPEAKS

Alexander H. Schullman, Union attorney of Los Angeles, lashed out at government agencies for their role in mishandling labor relations in agriculture and told the convention that the Union should continue to act on its own initiative, and that every failure or success, was due to inner weakness or strength, of the organization itself.

Union Signs Contract With Grape Growers

A new era in farm-union relations in the San Joaquin Valley was born on August 21 when the National Farm Labor Union signed a contract with Raisin Growers Protective Association for the 1951 raisin grape harvest.

The contract provided for payment of 5½ cent per tray for traying Thompson seedless raisin grapes, and for a labor supply arrangement. The rate was 4½ cents last year with most growers paying 5 cents before the season was over.

W. A. Swearingen, Fresno County NFLU organizer, reported that the contract also named the union as the sole bargaining representative for all workers it refers out. The pact covers only members of the association and can be extended to other growers only at the option of the union.

It is estimated that the grower members of the association have a peak requirement of 1,200 workers. Growers give the union at least seven days notice of their labor needs and with this notice the union hopes to map a plan picking program which will utilize the crews to the maximum advantage. Each crew will be under the supervision of a field steward or crew leader to insure satisfactory performance of work. He will be paid seven per cent of the crews' aggregate daily earnings by the grower.

Union officials are enthusiastic about this opportunity to show the value of the farmers' contracting with a responsible union for their workers. Swearingen and William Becker of Bakersfield signed the contract on behalf of the union. John Paboojian and George Boornazian, both of Fowler, signed for the association.

American Legion Calls for End of Wetback Menace

The powerful American Legion, at its recent convention in Miami, Fla., adopted a resolution calling for ending the wetback infiltration from Mexico. The Legion voted to support legislation penalizing employers who harbor or conceal illegal aliens in the United States and to permit U. S. officers to go on farms to search for illegal aliens. The Legion also called for the enforcement of the Internal Security Act, which requires registration of aliens in the United States.

Hon. George N. Craig, of Indianapolis, Past Commander, was among the officials of the American Legion who took the lead in getting official recognition of the Mexican wetback problem.

Union Organizes Cotton Picking Machine Operators

Organization of operators of cotton-picking machines is underway, in California. Following the adoption of a resolution by the San Jauquin Valley Farm Labor Council meeting in Hanford, Sunday, October 21, a series of meetings with cotton-picking machine operators got underway.

Organizers Swearingen and Becker, report that operators driving the huge machines in the cotton counties of California, are actually receiving less than 85 cents per hour for this skilled work. The top wage reported is $1.25 per hour.

Farm machine operators often work 12 to 18 hour shifts, without relief on the larger farms. Men who drive tractors, operate and maintain farm machines are broken down old men, before they reach the prime of life. They are dumped on the scrap heap. There is no pension system, they are not covered by social security, unemployment pay, or any other type of welfare program comparable to that covering similar skilled mechanics in industry.

In addition setting a fair wage scale for farm machine operators and providing time and half for all hours over 8 in a day or 40 in a week, and holidays with pay, the union will shortly propose a Welfare Program whereby employers will insure their skilled workers in case of old age or disability.

Farm Hand Plows Up Gold

Associated Press says:

A negro farm hand has plowed up 10 gold bricks.

L. Y. Dean, local banker, assessed their value at $7,500.

Each ingot, five inches long and two inches thick, was marked "1709" on one side and on the other side by an Indian head with bow and arrow.

The find was made when the Negro's plow struck a broken and crumbling stone vault on land owned by A. S. Jones, Eufaula, Alabama, lumber dealer.

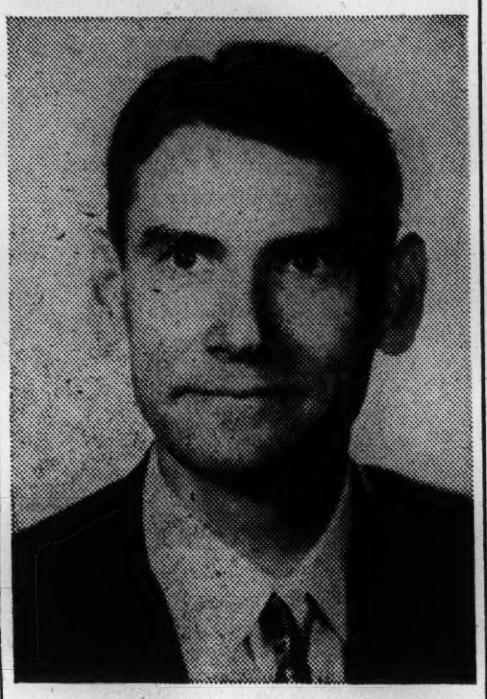
The gold must be turned into the Treasury and converted into currency before anyone can claim it, officials said.

The question arose as to whom the bars belong.

Two Phenix City attorneys gave an informal opinion that the gold bricks belong to the finder under the State's "treasure trove" law that says finders are keepers.

The rustic was asked by a city preacher to what denomination he belonged. "Well, sir," the farmer answered thoughtfully, "there's three roads comin' here to town—the long road, the short road, and the swamp road—but when I get to town with a load of grain, they don't say to me, 'Clem, which road did you come by?' but 'Clem, is your wheat good'?"

Named by Churchmen To Aid Little Man On the Land



Rev. Arthur C. Churchill

Friends of the Soil, an organization started by the Fellowship of Southern Churchmen to encourage better soil practices, has recently rallied to the support of the low income farmer by setting up a special committee, to determine ways and means whereby the Fellowship of Southern Churchmen help farm workers, tenant farmers and small farm owners, not only in the South but throughout the country.

Rev. Arthur C. Churchill, Minister to Farm Labor and Secretary-Treasurer of Agricultural and Millworkers Local 252 with headquarters in Memphis was selected as Chairman of this newly-formed committee. Members of Reverend Churchill's Committee are: Rev. Moses DeLaney, Shaw University, Raleigh, North Carolina; Rev. Howard Kester, J. C. Campbell Folk School, Brastown, North Carolina; Rev. V. A. Edwards, National Baptist Convention, Nashville, Tenn.; and Mr. A. E. Cox, Cruger, Mississippi.

Upon being informed of his selection, Rev. Churchill said that, "The selection of this committee shows an awareness that conditions are not as they should be among the nation's 5,000,000 agricultural workers and small farmers, as well as a feeling of responsibility on the part of this particular Fellowship to do something about them. We hope this Committee will be a sounding board which will serve to bring the Fellowship of Southern Churchmen into more direct relation with the problems of those at the bottom of the agricultural ladder. We are sure that we will benefit from the formation of this committee of able men. Howard Kester was one of the founders of our union when it was the Southern Tenant Farmers Union. And Gene Cox for a number of years served on our Executive Board. Others are equally well known."

A Co-op Gin In Arkansas

Union members have long talked about putting up a cooperative gin which would be built, owned and operated by the members. There always seemed to be too many stumbling blocks in the way of such a project; chiefly, of course, was the lack of capital. Now it appears from a visit by union officials to the Blackfish Lake Cooperative Gin, owned and operated by Negro farmers at Blackfish Lake, Arkansas, that such a project is well within the realm of possibility.

Vice President F. R. Betton and A. C. Churchill, Secretary-Treasurer of Agricultural and Millworkers Union, Local 252 at Memphis, recently visited the Eastern Arkansas gin with Friedrich Kiss, Austrian Labor Leader, who was in this country on a visit arranged by the Office of International Labor Affairs of the U. S. Department of Labor, to observe U. S. labor conditions. They saw the gin in operation and talked with Mr. Robinson, manager.

The co-operative gin was started in 1949. Fifty-two persons put up $10 each to form the cooperative. This $520 made it possible for them to borrow $12,000, with six years to pay it back. In the first year the gin made $15,000. Although they were only required to pay back $2,000 of the loan the first year, they actually paid $6,000 plus interest. That first year the gin paid each shareholder $140 apiece as a dividend.

With good management in the person of Mr. Robinson, who had previous experience preparing him for this type of work, and with good equipment, the best money could buy, making it the best and most up-to-date gin on Highway 70 between Memphis and Little Rock, the $70,000 modern Munger gin with electric power, has become a very successful enterprise. There are now 147 shareholders instead of the original 52, and they have built up a capital of $124,000. Cotton farmers from miles around take their cotton to the Blackfish Lake Cooperative Gin and are satisfied with the results.

HEADY STUFF

A big-hearted distiller in the South who believed in spreading sunshine wherever he went sent a barrel of his best whiskey up to a poor acquaintance who lived in the nearby hills.

A couple of weeks later he dropped in on the man and the man, in the course of the conversation, dropped the hint that he could use a little more liquor.

"Look here," said the distiller, "aren't you overdoing it a little? If my memory serves me right, it's only been two weeks since I gave you a barrel of whiskey."

"I know," was the reply, "but you got to remember that a barrel of whiskey doesn't last very long in a family that can't afford to keep a cow."

Missouri Members Ask Help to Build A Community Hall

A letter was received a short time ago by the midsouth office of the National Farm Labor Union, from Mrs. Lonie Ruth Beck, telling of the struggles the members of the Union in Gobler, Mo., have had, to better their conditions. They are members of Local 12 of the NFLU, and are mostly ex-sharecroppers and tenants, who have raised themselves to small farm ownership by their own efforts.

"In the year of 1934 a group of sharecroppers and small sharerenters came together and bought up 1,600 acres of wood land. No house nor road was here. Poor poverty stricken hard workers put up log huts to live in, suffered 1935 short crop, little land clear, no furnish available. 1937 high water covered the crops. Mosquitos malaria prevailed. No money or doctor care through the year. We began to organize different clubs, for the success of our peoples. We have the Extension Club, the P.T.A., and the Boy Scouts, Troop No. 111. And the oldest of all is the National Farm Labor Union, which was set up in 1938—at this time it was the Southern Tenant Farmer Union. Now along with all these is the Credit Union. We do not have a place to meet. Three years ago along came Mr. and Mrs. Steward who set up the Credit Union and offered us some used clothes to sell from the Congregational Church. We sold the garments for a small sum. From this we have succeeded in buying a lot in town, paid $225 cash, and take care of all the expense.

We have been putting on plate suppers, toe touchings, raising money for a building. Donations from the Congregational Church have been great. We have received a check from the National Farm Labor Union, President H. L. Mitchell, which was wonderful. We have $343.57 in the bank. This is quite a long way from our goal. We are asking our friends and their friends to send donations. We are planning a roll for all who give. Thank you so kindly for your efforts.

Sincerely,

Lonie Ruth Beck.

We are sure, after reading this letter, you will want to help Mrs. Beck and her group attain their goal of a community building where they can meet. Send your contributions, large or small, to Gobler Community Building, care of Lonie Ruth Beck, Gobler, Mo. Your help will be deeply appreciated.

Couldn't Stump Him

The new minister always had a scripture quotation ready for any question asked him. One day a bug flew in his mouth and he swallowed it. A little boy stepped up and asked:

"Do you have a text from the scripture for that?"

"Yes, said the minister: "He was a stranger and I took him in."

Weather Reports?

Up about Duluth, Minn., and Superior, Wis., many tales are told of the sudden changes in weather. Temperatures 30 to 40 below zero are common. Members of dairy farm local unions passed on a few to the rest of us. The Farm Labor News seldom fails to take a stand on any subject, but as the daily papers and radio announcers sometimes say "We do not necessarily agree or disagree as to the truth on this subject."

FROZEN TURKEYS

Late one evening, early last December the weather turned cold, it started to sleet and the temperatures dropped from a mere 10 below zero to 40 below in less than an hour. A farmer near Superior whose turkeys had gone to roost, found them all covered with sleet, frozen stiff with their heads under their wings. He took his axe, chopped the turkeys apart, brought them in the house, thawed them out, and they all lived until Christmas.

WHAT THEY DO IN SUPERIOR

In Superior the folks have nine months of winter and three months of poor sleighing. What do you do in Superior in the summer time? Why we play baseball, that day. A man from way down South got a job in Superior. A visitor asked him when do they have summer around here? Reply, "I don't know Boss, I have just been here 13 months."

Texas Judge Fed Workers Dog Food

The contract of a Texas county judge to feed Mexican farm workers has been revoked by the U. S. Labor Department on the ground that he used canned meat which was imported as dog food!

That's the story from Undersecretary of Labor Michael J. Galvin who said the contract of Judge R. E. Bibb to provide for the laborers at the Eagle Pass Texas, migratory workers center was being terminated, effective November 1. Notice is required in case of such cancellation.

Galvin acted when, he said, he learned that Judge Bibb had served the Mexican workers meat from Mexico which had cleared customs labeled as "animal food" The meat had been invoiced at customs as "dog food"—unfit for human consumption, Galvin said. The department said some 2,000 cases of the meat had been bought by the concessionaire.

Bibb, according to the Labor Department statement, is a prominent business man, county judge and chairman of the Democratic County Committee of Maverick County, Texas.

Louisiana, where we spend fabulous sums to keep our roads from going to the dogs and then turn them over to the cows.

Farm Workers Tell The Bee

Uninformed Farmers

Editor of The Bee—Sir: The federal law which authorizes agreements with Mexico for the importation of Mexican labor for work in agriculture (the Ellender-Poage Act), specifically provides that any grower who employs illegal entrants shall not be eligible to employ the legally imported labor.

While this fact has been publicized repeatedly over the air and through the press, and I doubt not by way of releases by organizations to their farmer members, there still seems to be an unawareness of this on the part of some farmers.

I talked with a large grower who did not seem to know of this provision. He does not employ illegal workers. Nevertheless, as an alert, businesslike farmer, he should have known about it.

Further, he was not aware, apparently, of the McCarran Security Act and the United States Immigration Service regulations pertaining to illegals, for he raised the point that farmers could not be expected to be able to tell an illegal from a legal Mexican national.

Any alien legally in this country must carry at all times an identification card. This card will have his fingerprints, time of entry and all data pertinent to his sojourn in this country as a legal visitor. If he does not have such a card he obviously is an illegal.

There is no more difficulty involved in a farmer asking a strange alien to see his card than there is is an industrialist's personnel office asking a citizen to see his social security card.

In the face of this, are some farmers who do employ the illegals going on with the old excuse they did not know they were illegals?

HUGHE C. WILLIAMS.
Porterville.

All Are Not Alike

Editor of The Bee — Sir: I am amused and somewhat disgusted when I read some of the letters about farm laborers.

Should I condemn all church members because I know a few hypocrites? I would be very unjust indeed. The same reasoning is applicable to the farm laborers or any group of people.

Any broad minded person knows there are many upright citizens among farm workers. It is true their living standards are lower. How can they be otherwise when farm wages are so low? Being poor is not a disgrace. Nor does it mean a lowering of principles and convictions.

There are those in every walk of life who drink. The percentage is no higher among agricultural workers.

I think we, the American people, would do well to rid ourselves of our discriminatory views and practice a little brotherly love. We all were created equal—believe it or not.

MRS. W. A. SWEARINGEN.
Fresno.

The above letters from farm workers recently appeared in the Fresno (Calif.) Bee, a daily newspaper.

Government Wage Order Is Ordeal

The tomato wage order has aggravated the chaos that prevails in labor management relations in California agriculture. The domestic farm workers of California have not even received the consideration given by the Wage Board to the workers of Puerto Rico, who have been exempted from controls because their living standards are so low. If this trend keeps up, it will not be a Square Deal, a New Deal or a Fair Deal. It will simply be an Ordeal for labor. NFLU Local 300 of Tracy, California, made the above statement when releasing its findings on the effects of the recent government wage order in California tomato fields.

"The members of Local 300 have made a field check of the effects of the recent wage stabilization order for tomato picking. As a result of this order, which was issued after the corporation farmers asked for wage ceilings, we find the following situation has developed:

Contractors have taken advantage of the confusion created by the order to again establish the practice of hold-backs of 2 cents per box, the so-called bonus which was eliminated by the 1950 strike.

Wage cuts have been carried out ranging from 1 to 4 cents a box in comparison with the union rates obtained last year. In the second and third picking these wage cuts will amount to as much as 10 cents a box.

Since the Wage Board will not receive appeals from the workers unless the corporation growers recognize the union, the order has put a premium on the employment of wetbacks and on the unnecessary importation of Mexican contract Nationals.

The encouragement given to wetbacks and the contractors who hire them for the corporation farmers has led to the waste of large quantities of tomatoes. In some fields this waste is probably not less than 25 per cent of the crop.

Experienced domestic pickers have moved out of the area because of the wage cuts. They have been replaced by alien pickers who do not have the necessary skill to pick the tomatoes and keep the vines in good condition for additional picking.

Work standards have been lowered. Wetbacks and contract Nationals who are paid from 15 to 18 cents a box are forced to carry boxes, cut, pear tomato vines, shake the vines and cover them again—all for the price of picking. All this is unpaid labor which local resident pickers will not tolerate.

Contractors, growers and processors are making considerably higher profits this year than in 1950, but the pickers have received less all the way down the line.

Since the Wage Stabilization Board has no machinery for explaining, administering and interpreting its orders directly to the rank and file pickers, the labor contractors are spreading misinformation about the meaning of the order to suit their interests. By recognizing the contractors the Wage Stabilization Board has strengthened the evils of California's "patron" system.

Tim Parker Writes —

To Farm Labor News

I am sending you an article out of my home town paper, I thought you might like to read it. It was written by Drew Pearson. I think it is very true and very good. Then also, I think you should hear from the presidents of the locals once in a while. I do hope that you are getting along alright. I was satisfied with the Convention in Salinas, it was indeed a success and the Mexicans were a majority. I am praying for the day when my people wake up and quit looking for free rides.

My local is doing a little better now but not half as good as I would like for it to be. One of these days, I hope to tell the farm worker just where he stands, in this fast day and times. I noticed at the convention every worker was so sincere you couldn't help crying a little, it was somewhat like Church.

I hope we can get enough money together to carry on for one more year. I feel that the break will come in about two more years for sure. When we have done all we can, then God steps in and makes a way for humans to go just a little further.

When you find time to answer this letter, tell me what you think are some of the main short-comings with the presidents of the locals; I won't feel bad at all. I want to improve. I have taken on a new job as head of the Council for this valley.

Well, I could say more but this will be all for now.

Fraternally yours,
(s) Timothy Parker
Bakersfield, Calif.

Texas Dixiecrats Bar Wetback Report

Texas Congressmen John Lyle, Ken Reagan and Lloyd Bentsen, are credited by the United Press with having held up a report on the House Judiciary Committee on "Wetbacks infiltration." The report prepared by Dr. Francis Wilder, of Lafayette College in Pennsylvania, a special investigator for Judiciary Committee which recommended a two-year prison sentence and a $5,000 fine for employers of wetback labor, was rejected by J. Frank Wilson, also of Texas, because "Dr. Wilder, didn't hold public hearings to allow Texas farmers to present their views." It is quite understandable why Congressman Bentsen would block such a report . . . last July the U. S. Imigration and Naturalization Service apprehended 40 to 50 hungry wetbacks on his large-scale farming operations near McAllen, Texas.

Statement of Ownership

Statement of the ownership, management, and circulation required by the Act of Congrses of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Acts of March 3, 1933, and July 2, 1946 (Title 39. United States Code, Section 233).

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National Farm Labor Union, A. F. of L., 825 Victor Bldg., Washington, D. C. An unincorporated labor organization, principal officers are H. L. Mitchell, President, 825 Victor Bldg., Washington, D. C.; Dorothy Dowe, Secretary-Treasurer, 825 Victor Bldg., Washington, D. C.

3. The known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: (if there are none, so state.) None.

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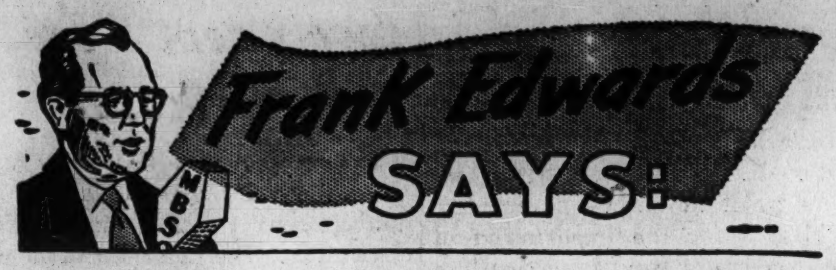
5. The average number of copies of each issue of this publication sold or distributed, through the mails or otherwise, to paid subscribers during the 12 months preceding the date shown above was: (This information is required from daily, weekly, semiweekly, and triweekly newspapers only.)

H. L. MITCHELL,
Editor.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 2nd day of September, 1951. Roberta Stewart, Notary Public, District of Columbia. My Commission expires August 14, 1955.



Washington, D. C.

• News Releases Mean Nothing . . .

Defense Production Administrator Manly Fleischmann told reporters recently . . . with a straight face . . . that his agency will be tougher in the future on requests for fast tax write-off deals.

The tax amortization business is rotten and the congressional investigating committee blasted it. Mobilizer Charles Wilson announced that he was clamping a 60-day freeze on these handouts to big business. But as the Wall Street Journal points out . . . during that phony freeze the DPA handed out 1,483 more tax free building deals.

As of this moment, the corporations of America have $10 billion worth of permits for tax-free buildings. They get the buildings . . . and you, the taxpayers, get the bills.

• Slave Wage Lobby . . .

A new pressure play is underway . . . designed to increase the flood of destitute Mexicans pouring into the southwestern part of the United States. Eugene McCarthy, Democratic Congressman from Minnesota and a member of the House Agriculture Committee, tells me that the lobbyists are so bold that they have formed an organization to interfere with the enforcement of the immigration laws. Congressman McCarthy identified the outfit as the South Texas Association. By preventing the immigration authorities from enforcing the law along the border, they expect to permit more cheap labor in the form of wetbacks to pour into this country.

Recent raids have revealed that illegal Mexicans who slipped in to work for slave wages on the farms of the Southwest have drifted on into the slums of cities like Chicago and St. Louis, creating both a serious health and welfare problem until the taxpayers paid for their return to Mexico.

• Will Republican Head Go?

Watch for the early exit of Guy Gabrielson as head of the Republican National Committee. Mr. Gabrielson's activities in financing his faltering gasoline venture with $18 million worth of public money still contains a lot of unanswered questions . . . and many top Republicans feel that their party would be improved by Mr. Gabrielson's absence. They are only waiting until it can be done less noticeably than the resignation of Democrat Leader Bill Boyle.

Hear Frank Edwards AFL Radio Program

Frank Edwards, is sponsored by the American Federation of Labor and is heard over 700 radio stations, 5 nights a week. Nearly all Mutual Broadcasting System Radio Stations carry this program. Edwards often reports on the wetback issue. He tells the truth about the big farmers, their stooges in government and calls a spade, a spade. All members of the union and farm workers everywhere, are urged to make it a regular practice to hear Frank Edwards. Consult your daily papers for the nearest radio station carrying this important program: sponsored by the 8 million men and women who make up the American Federation of Labor.

National Convention To Be Held in Memphis

Official notices of the meeting of the bi-annual convention of the National Farm Labor Union will be mailed to all Local Unions in the next few days. Tentative arrangements have been made to hold the Convention in Memphis, Tenn., in early December, in connection with an annual meeting of Midsouth Local Unions.

SOME MULE

A woman clerk discovered the youngster wandering forlornly in the lobby of the great building and, in a spirit of kindness said to him: "Perhaps you'd like to see the 40-foot mural on the floor above. It's really quite interesting."

With an expression of awed anticipation, the farm boy hotfooted his way upstairs. A few minutes later their came a despairing call from the Bureau of Animal Husbandry.

"What's the big idea?" a voice demanded, "Who the heck sent a guy up here looking for a 40-foot mule?"

$4 Per 100 Set For Cotton Picking By Government

On October 18, the Wage Stabilization Board ordered a raise in the ceiling on cotton picking to $4.00 per 100 pounds, for work in California. The government wage order was issued following hearings held in Bakersfield and Fresno. Petitions for the hearing were filed by the National Farm Labor Union, following a statement by a WSB official, that only 10 per cent more could be paid than the wage of 1950.

William Becker, President of the California Council of Agricultural Unions, appeared on behalf of the Union, along with representatives from local unions in Kern, King, Fresno and Merced counties. The union cotton-pickers successfully argued for a rate of not less than $4 per 100, for the first picking. Becker, hailed the action of the Wage Stabilization Board, but made it clear that Union wasn't solely concerned with wages. The union leader said, "there are other issues nearly as important as wages, such as wetbacks being hired, dishonest scales for the weighing the workers' cotton, which are often set back to cheat the worker, the lack of machinery for adjusting grievances of workers, the alternative being unauthorized strikes. When these things are worked, only then will, "civilization have come to the cotton fields."

Becker, also said that the Union would join with employers in petitions for higher rates than the $4 ceiling, where crops were in bad condition and there was a need for setting higher rates in order to secure enough pickers to harvest the crop.

Farm Bureau Up to Same Old Tricks

The Farm Bureau of the Holmes County, Miss., on September 26, 1951, sent out letters from Congressman Frank E. Smith, and Senator James E. Eastland, asking all farmer's tenants and sharecroppers in the Mississippi County, to pay their Farm Bureau dues. The letters from Eastland and Smith were sent: W. R. Sullivan, County Agent. Though they were sent out on Farm Bureau stationery, there is no doubt that the County Agent's Office mailed them.

FARM LABOR NEWS

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